5 Aug. 1645 2. 15.

THE INDEPENDENTS CATECHISME.

OR

Some Obſervations gathered out of Doctor BASTVVICKE his Religious and Learned Treatiſe

ENTITVLED

INDEPENDENCY

NOT GODS

ORDINANCE.

For the uſe of all poor Ignorant, wavering, and ſeduced *Independents*.

BY JOHN BERNARD Φιλοπρέσβυτερ.

MAT. 22. 19. *Ye do erre not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.*

1 JOHN 4. 1. *Beleeve not every Spirit but try the Spirits, whether they are of God, becauſe many falſe Prophets are gone out into the world.*

London, Printed by *John Macock*. 1645.

TO THE *Wavering* or *Seduced* INDEPENDENT *READER.*

Deare Brother,

THe Learned Doctor hath presented a large Treatise to the view of the world, which proves the Presbyterian Government DEPENDENT to be Gods Ordinance, and not

the Presbyterian Government INDEPENDENT, by ſtrong Arguments drawn from plain texts of Scripture. For three Reaſons following I have prevail'd with him that ſome Obſervations gathered out of it, and digeſted into this ſhort Catechiſme, might be publiſhed for thy good.

Firſt becauſe thou maiſt be perſwaded thereby either not to waver, or to be perfectly reformed from that dangerous errour.

Secondly, becauſe ſome have objected, The Doctors Treatiſe is tedious, though every particular in it be abſolutely neceſſary

ceſſary to vindicate Truth from Error, this Epitome may invite thee ſeriouſly and ſpeedily to read it, thou mayſt happily finde much ſatisfaction to thy unſtable minde in it, if with the men of Berea, Act. 17. 7. Thou ſearch the Scriptures. If niceties delight thee I refer thee to the Doctors Treatiſe, which is a garden full of ſuch flowers.

Thirdly, becauſe thy uncharitable Teachers, not able to juſtifie their fond opinion, yet have unworthily vilified the Doctors ſound judgement calling him Apoſtate, foole, that he is crazed in his braine, being

not misled with their New Lights, but hath clearly discovered the mist of Errour wherewith they have blinded thine, and others eyes. Christian charity binds me to give him deserved applause, for his Pious, Learned and Charitable worke; that thou mayst be reformed thereby, is the prayer of him who wisheth thy souls good equally with his own.

John Bernard.

The firſt part of the Independents Catechiſme, upon theſe 4. Poſitions.

1. *That there were more particular Aſſemblies, and Congregations in the Church of* Jeruſalem *than one.*

2. *That all thoſe ſeverall Congregations made but one Church.*

3. *That all thoſe ſeverall Congregations were under one Presbytery.*

4. *That the Government of the Church of* Jerusalem *is to be a pattern of Government to all ſucceeding Ages.*

THE INDEPENDENTS CHATECHISME.

Quest. WHat Government hath Christ Ordained in the Church of *Jerusalem*, and in the rest of the Primitive Churches, to be a patrern unto all Churches for Government, Doctrine, and manners unto the end of the World?

Answ. A Presbyterian Government, that is, by a Common-Councell of Presbyters (as in the Originall) or more plainely of a Religious, grave, solid, learned, and wise Councell of divines and ministers, as was in the Assembly

ſembly, *Act.* 1. 15. unto whom Chriſt had given the power of the keyes, *Mat.* 18. 16. 17. 18. That this was the Government eſtabliſhed in the Church, plainely appeares by theſe texts of Scripture, *Act.* 14. 23. *Act.* 20. 17. 28. *Tit.* 1. 5. 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. *Heb.* 13. 7. 24. 1 *Pet.* 5. 1. 2. 3. *Jam.* 5. 14. *Act.* 15. 6. 22. *Act.* 16. 4. *Act.* 21. 17. The objections made by the Independent Brethren, concerning the qualification of the Presbyters are punctually confuted in the *Dis* Treatiſe page 19. to the 29. Shewing that there is no expectation of miracles in our times, though the Apoſtles and Primitive Presbyters were extraordinarily gifted for the confirmation of the truth of the Goſpell to all ſucceeding ages: Chriſt himſelfe proclaimes thoſe bleſſed that believe without ſeeing of miracles, *Iohn* 20:29. This qualification in the Apoſtles, and primitive Presbyters is continued unto the end of the

World

World in the Presbyters and Ministers of the Gospell. Viz. the power of order, and preachings and the power of Jurisdiction, or rulings: Because what soever is written, is for our instruction.

Quest. Were there many congregations, and Assemblies in the mother Church of *Ierusalem*, which in our dialect are called Churches: or did the multitudes of beleevers in *Ierusalem* make but one congregation, as the Independents suppose?

Answ. These plaine texts of Scripture following do clearely prove that the many ten thousands of believers converted by *John Baptist*, by Christ, his Apostles, the 70. disciples and the rest of the primitive Presbyters, could never meet together in one, 10. or scarcely in 100. congregations to partake of all acts of worship to edification, as appeares by the multitude of beleevers mentioned, in *Mat.* 3. 1. 2. 5. 6. *Mat.* 7. 12.

7. 12. *Luke* 16. 16. *Luke* 7. 29. *Iohn* 7. 31. 40. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. *Acts* 2. from the 37. to the end of the chapter. *Acts* 4. 4. *Act.* 5. 14. *Act.* 6. 1. 2. 3. 7. *Act.* 21. 20. to suppose these multitudes could meet in one congregation to be edifyed is not agreeable to sense or reason. Because there were above one hundred preachers, and ministers besides the Apostles, and all these continually taken up in praying & preaching unto those many ten thousands of believers distributed into severall congregations, that possibly they might edifie their preachers being all so employed, they could not leave their ministry to serve tables, *Acts* 6. 2. Therefore of necessity so many ministers must have severall places to preach in, and those multitudes of believers be distributed into several congregations for them to preach to, and severall places to baptize in, other-wise there would have beene great confusion.

For

For but one of them could ſpeake at once to ædification. Theſe plaine teſtimonyes of Scripture above cited may convince the Independents error.

Becauſe they clearely take away the Foundation of their New-Churches which are built upon this miſtake, that there were no more believers in the Church of *Ieruſalem* then could meet in one congregation.

Four weake objections to that purpoſe are punctually confuted by the *Dr.* from *page* 42. unto the 53. *page.*

Queſt. Were not all thoſe hundred preachers and the many ten thouſands of believers ſo ſcattered abroad in the perſecution we read of, *Act.* 8. 1. 2. 3. That there was left no more believers in *Ieruſalem* then could meet in one congregation?

Anſw. By that place is meant all the preachers, and miniſters onely, except the Apoſtles, as it appeares, *Acts* 8. 4. they that were ſcattered abroad, went

to

to and fro preaching the Word: As for the people, they were many of them caſt into priſon, and it is moſt probable that the reſt were in their owne houſes, there is not any mention made of their being ſcattered abroad; if they had, they had no Call to preach; now the text ſaith they did preach that were ſcattered abroad. But by their abiding in *Ieruſalem* the Apoſtles had both entertainment and ſafety, without them they could not have ſecur'd themſelves from the wolves: And the Apoſtles care was ſuch of feeding the ſheepe of Chriſt, that they continued in *Ieruſalem* to comfort and ſupport the Church; And refreſh the believers in this heat of perſecution: when they wanted the helpe of their faithfull miniſters, and Paſtors.

Queſt. Who Govern'd, ordered, and ruled this Church conſiſting of ſo many congregations and aſſemblies?

Anſw. The Apoſtles and Presbyters

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(as in the Originall.) *Act.* 7. 19. 29. 30. *Act.* 15. 2. 4. 6. 22. *Act.* 16. 4. 5. *Act.* 21. 17, 18, 25. And howsoever the Apostles in the places above specified are differenc'd by that title from the Presbyters, yet in all acts of Government performed by them in the Church of *Ierusalem*, they were for the substance of them ordinary acts such as Presbyters dayly perform. And therefore the Apostles are in them to be considered as Presbyters who received the power of Jurisdiction or ruling, and acting as Presbyters were in their ordinary employment; Though at other times they used Superlative authority as Christs extraordinary *Ambassadours* 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. Some Impertinent Cavills about the Apostles exercising the office of Presbyters made by the Independents are clearely taken away by the *Dr.* from *pag.* 84. unto the 94. *p.* And least any should conceit the Apostles were not Presbyters, because

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in those places above it is said the Apostles and Presbyters making a distinction betwixt them. The Apostle Saint *Peter* resolves the doubt, 1 *Pet.* 5. 1. 2. 3. in which place *Peter* styles himselfe a Presbyter or Elder; In the second Epistle of *Iohn ver.* 1. Saint *Iohn* doth style himself Presbyter, or Elder, saying; *The Presbyter to the Elect Lady.*

Saint *Paul* likewise styles himself a Presbyter if you compare 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. with 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. in which place it is evident that Saint *Paul* was one of the Presbytery.

Quest. Why do the Independent Brethren conclude every of their congregations a particular Church, depending upon no other Church; either for Government, Doctrine, or Manners, when the whole current of the Scripture doth so clearly expresse the Presbyterian Government Ordain'd by Christ in the mother Church of *Jerusalem*

ſalem muſt be a pattern unto all daughter Churches untill the end of the World.

Now it hath beene plainly proved that the Church of *Ieruſalem* conſiſted of many congregations, which made but one Church, And that one Church diſtributed into thoſe particular aſſemblyes, was Governed by a Common-Councell or Presbytery. The example of which Church the Independent Brethren pretend to follow.

Anſw. The Brethrens Anſwer is ſeconded with theſe reaſons. Firſt, becauſe their particular Churches have for their patterne no leſſe then the whole *Colledge* of the Apoſtles and Presbyters, *Act.* 1. 15. Where they ſate in councell to chuſe a diſciple in the place of *Judas*, the number of the men, not of men and women as in *verſe* 14. being one hundred and twenty. The Independent Brethren miſtaking the members of the congregation, who

were men, and Brethren, *verse* 16. and not men Brethren and Sisters, do peremptorily conclude from hence, there were no more believers in *Ierusalem*, then in this congregation; notwithstanding the multitude that believed, and were baptized, by *John Baptist*, and this whole *Colledge* of Apostles and Presbyters before the Passion of Christ. Secondly, Because their Churches (though made up with a number of women) by imitating the Assembly of Apostles and Presbyters, every particular Church doth thereby gaine the same Authority which our *Saviour* gave to the whole *Colledge* of Apostles, *Mat.* 18. 15. 16. 17. 18. which being extraordinary, and exceeding the tenure of the Scripture to have so much power confered upon a smal congregation, doth declare our Brethren the Independents to be wise above that which is written, 1 *Cor.* 4. 6. and in knowledge to resemble the children of this world, *Mat.* 16. 8.

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The second part of the INDEPENDENTS Catechisme, gathered out of the Treatise upon these six following Queres, concerning the gathering of CHURCHES.

1. *Quere.* WHere it is commanded in the word of God that the Ministers of the Gospell shall run about from their owne places, and Charges to gather believing Christians, from amongst believing Christians, into their owne Independent congregations, and debar them from all Church-fellowship, and communica-

tion with other believers in Gods holy Ordinances and Sacraments. And proclaime, all that are not molded up after this new-modell to be a people out of covenant, to have no right to the seales of the New-covenant; neither they nor their children, though believers, whether this way of gathering Churches was ever heard of before these daies whether this be to set up Christ as King upon his throne, to make divisions and Scismes in Churches and among beleivers and Brethren, and that upon groundlesse pretences.

2. *Quere.* Whether for the making any man or woman a member of the Church, it be necessary to the believeing, and being baptized, that they should walke some dayes, weekes, monthes, or yeares with them that they may have experience of their conversation before they can be admitted, and after that a confession of their faith, should be publikely made before the con-

congregation, and the evidences of their converſion, as the time when, the place where, the occaſion how, they were converted: And if any, either men, or women, ſhall except againſt their evidence that then they are not to be admitted.

3. *Quere.* Whether for making any man a member or an officer of a Church, the conſent of the whole congregation, or the greater part of them beſides the Presbyters and Miniſters be requiſite.

4. *Quere.* Whether for the admiſſion of any one into Church-fellowſhip and communion a private ſolemne Covenant be requiſite or neceſſary for the making any one a member, the neglect or refuſall of the which makes them incapable of their member-ſhip or admiſſion.

5. *Quere.* Whether the women and people as well as the Presbyters and Miniſters have the power of the Keyes.

And whether the women have all their voices in the Church, both for election and reprobation of members and officers as well as the men, and whether the consent of all the women, or the greatest part of them to be requisite, for the making any one a member or officer? So that if they gainsay it, being the greater number, or allow of it, the most voices carry the businesse.

6. *Quere.* Whether the practice and preaching of all these things, and the gathering of Churches after this manner, be to set up Christ as King upon his throne; and whether Churches and assemblyes thus congregated be the onely true Churches in the which only Christ rules and reigns as King, and all other that are not molded up after this fashion, be not true congregated Churches, and in the which Christ is not set up as King upon his throne?

Quest. Who were commanded by Christ to preach the Gospell, and to propound

propound to all Nations the conditions upon which they were to be admitted into his Church; And who were to admit them?

Anſw. The Apoſtles onely, and Presbyters, and Miniſters of the Goſpell; As appeares by Chriſts Commiſſion given unto them and his promiſe to be with them untill the end of the World: *Mat.* 28.19.20. *Marke* 16.15.16. *Acts* 26.15. to the 20. *verſ.* Here the Commiſſion was onely delivered to the Apoſtles and the Miniſters of the Goſpell that they ſhould admit whoſoever believed and were baptized.

Queſt. Did *John Baptiſt* or any of the primitive Apoſtles, and Miniſters ever call for a congregation to joyne with them in the admitting any member into the Church of Chriſt, or did they demand ſuch evidences and qualifications as the Independents do in the foregoing *Queres*?

Anſw. Their preaching, and practiſe in Baptizing, which is admitting members into the Church of Chriſt, doth ſhew plainely they did it by vertue of their Commiſſion, no mention being made of a new Church, or congregation to have voices with them, or any other conditions to be required, then *Repent, believe, and be baptized*; which is plainely proved: *Mat.* 3.2.6. *Luke* 3.7. *Luke* 7.29. *John* 3.4. *Act.* 2.37. 38.41. *Act.* 8.36.37.38.

Queſt. Where did the Apoſtles and primitive Presbyters delight to gather Churches?

Anſw. Amongſt the loſt ſheepe of the houſe of *Iſrael*, to bring them into Chriſts fold; as appeares by Saint *Paul* accompting it a diſhonour *to build upon another mans Foundation*. *Romans* 15.20.

Queſt. What command have women in the Church either for preaching, or giving their voices, in the election

ction or reprobation of members or officers?

Anſw. No more command have they for any ſuch practiſe, then by Saint *Pauls* words is due unto them, 1 *Cor.* 14.34.35.36. 1 *Tim.* 2.11.12. in both theſe places it is the Apoſtles ſpeciall care to prevent womens intermedlings in matters of the Church, which may for ever ſilence the Independents weake opinion who tolerate womens voicing it in their Churches contrary to the Word of God.

Queſt. May diverſities of Religions be tolerated amongſt Chriſtians, or were they ever tolerated in the *Old* or *New-Teſtament*?

Anſw. The practiſe of the holy men of God ſheweth they may not, and their practiſe is for our imitation; 1 *Cor.* 10.6.7. *Rom.* 15.14. *Gen.* 17.1.2. 3. *Gen.* 18.17.18.19. *Joſ.* 24.14.15.16. In theſe places it is cleare that *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Iacob*, and *Ioſhua* ſuffered no

Idolatry

Idolatry nor Sects in their families, for this had been to tolerate all Religions, or to worship the true God in a false manner, and not to do Justice and Judgement.

Quest. Are the examples of the Patriarches, Prophets, and Apostles, who tolerated onely the true Religion; or the examples of *Poland*, *Transylvania* and *Holland*, to be followed, who tolerate all Religions?

Answ. Saint *Paul* will decide the controversie sufficiently for us, if we delight not more in novelties then in the old way prescrib'd in the written Word: *Rom.* 12.1,2. *Phil.* 3.17. *Phil.* 4. 8,9. In which places Saint *Paul* doth declare that we must not fashion our selves according to this World, we must not imitate the Saints of God in their failings, and we must walke so as we have him & the rest of the Saints for an example, *Our blessed Saviour blames the Angell of the Church of Pergamus*

gamus *Thyatira*, *Laodicea*, *Revel.* 2.12. 13,14. to the 20. *Revel.* 3.14,15,16. *Becauſe they tolerated Balaam and Iezabell, ſhewing his great diſpleaſure againſt them for it*; Now theſe that labour for a toleration of all Religions muſt needs be Luke-warme, ſuch as God will ſpue out of his mouth.

Queſt. What examples have we in Scripture for the ſuppreſſing of falſe Teachers, when they are openly diſcovered?

Anſw. The Prophets and Elders of *Iſrael* in all ages who had the ſword of juſtice in their hands to puniſh all ſeducers as appeares, 1 *Kings* 18. 21. *Deutr.* 13. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. *Iudges* 6.30, 31. and their practiſe is for our Magiſtrats imitation, 1 *Cor.* 10. 6, 7. *Romans* 15.14.

Queſt. What eſteeme ought Chriſtians to have of thoſe Independent miniſters who inſtead of preaching the Word of God, in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon,

ſeaſon to convert ſoules, preach their owne traditions and inventions, to deſtroy thoſe precious ſoules which other Godly Miniſters have converted?

Anſw. Saint *Pauls* ſentence is of any ſuch falſe teacher, *Let him be accurſed, Gal.* 1.8,9. And if we will believe our Saviours words; Such mens condition is very dangerous whatſoever they may promiſe to themſelves, *Mat.* 18.6,7. *Woe be unto that man by whom the offence cometh.* Now ſuch offence is come by wandring after the Independent Miniſters New-lights, that all Godly Miniſters may with Saint *Paul* wiſh they were cut off, who trouble the Church, by ſuch groundleſſe pretences.

And whereas all Godly Presbyters and Miniſters, who preach Chriſt out of good will, open the eyes of the blind, turne them from darkeneſſe to light, and from the power of Satan unto God

God, ought highly to be Honour'd for their workes ſake; 1 *Theſſ.* 5.13. *Yea, that they deſerve double Honour*; 1 *Tim.* 5.17. Yet the ſame Apoſtle doth on the contrary give unto all believers a ſpeciall caution *To beware of falſe teachers Rom.* 16. 17, 18. (*Coloſſ.* 2.8. 2 Epiſtle of Saint *Iohn* 9, 10, 7. *verſes*) *Concluding that they that are ſuch ſerve not the Lord Ieſus Chriſt, but their owne bellies, and with faire ſpeech, and flattering, deceive the hearts of the ſimple.*

FINIS.

Imprimatur,

Ja. Cranford.

July 3. 1645.

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